

REMARKS

Claims 1-4, 7-8, and 17-23 remain pending in the current Application. Claims 9-13 and 15-16 are being cancelled herein. (Note that claims 5, 6, and 14 have been previously cancelled.) Applicants submit that the amendments do not add new matter to the current Application. All the amendments herein have been made in order to clarify the claims and not for prior art reasons. Applicants also submit that (1) no amendment made was related to the statutory requirements of patentability unless expressly stated herein, and (2) no amendment made was for the purpose of narrowing the scope of any claim, unless Applicants have argued herein that such amendment was made to distinguish over a particular reference or combination of references.

Although Applicants believe claims 9-13 and 15-16 to be patentable over US Patent No. 6,587,670 (corresponding to EP 1014566A2 and hereinafter referred to as Hoyt) in view of US Patent No. 6,593,807 (hereinafter referred to as Groves), Applicants are herein canceling claims 9-13 and 15-16 to further prosecution. The Examiner has also rejected dependent claims 17-22; however, these all depend directly or indirectly from claim 23 which the Examiner has indicated is allowable. Therefore, Applicants submit that claims 17-22 are allowable for at least those reasons which apply to claim 23. (Note that in the previous response by Applicants, Applicants amended each of claims 17-20 and 22 to depend from claims 23 rather than claim 16.)

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Conclusion

Although Applicants may disagree with statements made by the Examiner in reference to the claims and the cited references, Applicants are not discussing all these statements in the current Office Action, yet reserve the right to address them at a later time if necessary.

Applicant respectfully solicits allowance of the pending claims. Contact me if there are any issues regarding this communication or the current Application.

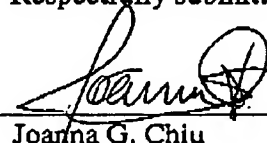
If Applicant has overlooked any additional fees, or if any overpayment has been made, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to credit or debit Deposit Account 502117.

Respectfully submitted,

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